

To Whomever Finds This Time Capsule:

My name is Becky Fish. My family lived on this property from 1945 to 2023. I spent most of my life hoping to become caretaker of this property after my parents, but that is sadly not to be. My mother is overwhelmed and insists on selling, and I have no say. I hope whoever does purchase it treasures both houses and the woods and keeps them for generations of their family. I would hand write this letter, but arthritis in my thumb sadly makes that not feasible.

Included is a report on the stone house that I wrote in 2003, with updated information I found out recently. I also have a copy of the historian Ned Harrington's report on the Ten Lost Lots of Bucks County, of which this property turns out to be one. He had written a more specific report on the property itself while helping me with the house report, but it has been misfiled and cannot be found. Copies of both reports will be donated to the Doylestown and New Hope Historical Societies when the latter is located. Ned sadly passed away in 2009, but he was an invaluable resource and a fascinating person. Finally, I've added some dried flowers from my mother's beloved hydrangea that we have to leave behind. I have the other sprig with me.

The modular home on the property, which I pray still stands, was my parents' dream home. It was our first real home, after living in apartments and a literal trailer for most of my life. The trailer stood in the western portion of the gravel driveway from the time I was 4 until I was 14. It was built around 1995, when I was in 8<sup>th</sup> grade. The day the cranes came to lift the sections onto place, every single person on the school bus began to stand and applaud as I got off. Even the driver clapped from her seat. They were happy I was getting a real home.

The upstairs, north facing room with 2 windows was mine, the one with 1 window was my sister's. I loved red, so it originally had a rose carpet and pink walls. Those were replaced with the current colors in 2015 after a carpet beetle infestation. My parents had forgotten to cover the air conditioner while I was away at college. The hole in my sister's closet roof was made by her as an access point to the attic, and thus my parent's room. My father never did get around to repairing it. He has always had a habit of starting projects and never finishing them. He also tends to put away other people's projects so they can't finish them either. If you are the owner who had to fix what he didn't finish (the kitchen renovation, the ceiling, etc.), I apologize.

The front porch professionally was added in the late 2010s after nearly a decade of being concrete posts sunk into the ground. Before then, we had just a set of steps my (honorary) Uncle Bob made when the house

was constructed. I wish we'd gotten to enjoy it longer. The back porch was built in 1985 to go with the trailer. I assume it's been replaced by now, and I do not blame you. It should have been maintained better.

The two trees in front of the house are a pine and a juniper. The pine was our single live Christmas tree when I was in high school, replacing a dogwood that was fatally damaged when the crane operators brought in the house sections. My dad always wanted another dogwood, but they are expensive. The juniper has been there since at least the 1980s. There used to be a poplar just south of it, where the edge of the porch now stands. That was removed in the late 1990s, as it was becoming a danger to the house. The willow tree near the sand mound was bought to try and dry up the swamp that is the back yard, but was killed by lightning. It is slowly trying to regrow. There is another non-native tree, the spruce. That was planted in the mid-1990s by my sister and I. We had gotten it from school as part of an arbor day project.

My parents cleaned a lot of trash from the woods in the 1980s, left by the owners from the 1800s - 1940s. We have prevented hunting, and my uncle used to feed the deer. Foxes, deer, rabbits, voles, mice, groundhogs, and feral cats are the main mammals. Birds include mourning doves, hairy, downy, and pileated woodpeckers, great horned owls, whole flocks of turkeys, hummingbirds, red tail hawks, and turkey buzzards all make nests there. Various species of frogs enjoy the creeks, along with small crayfish, red striped salamanders, water striders and minnows. Snakes are mostly garters, though a small eastern rattlesnake has made appearances near swampy areas. Honeybees, gnats, ants, and butterflies are the main insects, but we've also seen such rarities as hummingbird moths. Ticks are also common, so be careful of Lyme disease anywhere in the area.

The swampy back yard is partially because of the modular house disrupting the water flow, but also because of the diabase underlying the shale. Most of the woods grow over a diabase dyke. The land does dry out the further you roam into the woods, however the diabase is also much closer to the surface. Wineberries grow in profusion out there, and make excellent pies. Do avoid the pokeberries and chokecherries, though. The honeysuckle is invasive, as is the Chinese Lady Slipper. The jewelweed and skunk cabbage are quite native. Some areas even have Eastern bluebells and snake lilies, both rare in Pennsylvania. Trees include oak, beech, juniper (red cedar), birch, maple, and dogwood.

There used to be a huge lilac bush at the stone house, and rhododendrons grow along the property line delineated by Dark Hollow Run. The lilac tree used to prosper so well because when my uncles were young and went fishing, they'd always bring home their catch. My grandmother's rule was, "You catch it, you clean it." So they'd bury it back

there. It's said that's why daffodils used to grow so well near the house. Nearer the woods, my grandmother also had several groups of tiger lilies. I miss those flowers. She planted a small peony bush after my grandfather passed, in his memory. It was off to the western side of the driveway. Sadly, it attracted so many ants my aunt got rid of it. The cedar gazebo swing was added about 2 years before my grandmother died, and was her favorite place to sit.

There was a yucca plant near the pine tree in the inner circle that bloomed yearly. When they paved the driveway (it was originally gravel), that yucca proved impossible to kill! It even grew right through the asphalt. Its descendant lives near the newer house, at the edge of the woods. (By the way, I recommend keeping the modular house driveway as gravel. It is hard enough to get up in winter, due to the steepness. We have been advised that paving it would make getting up it with ice would be impossible and dangerous to attempt.

Since I mentioned the property line earlier, I hope you've had an official survey done. The neighbors with the huge fence visible from the stone house have been moving that fence further and further onto the property for years. The only thing stopping them at the time of this writing are the three huge, 200+ year old oak trees in the way. There is a similar issue with the Dark Hollow Run boundary. The neighbor keeps pushing his signs and wire fence further onto the property. That one, we keep cutting down.

Secrets of the woods include a small firepit, not visible from the road or any of the houses. It probably hasn't been used in decades, but there were log seats and signs of old burning last I checked. There is also a story that my uncle Tom, upset about his fiancée leaving him, threw the diamond engagement ring into the woods. It has never been found. My sister was also fond of burying my toys, so if you ever find a My Little Pony or one of those Quintuplet dolls from the 1980s, you'll know how it got there. The rickety 2 plank wooden bridge across the first creek was added by me and my sister. We took some of the timbers leftover from constructing the newer house. I'm surprised how long they've survived, to be honest.

If you're curious about the 90 degree S-curve, the story goes that when Aquetong Road was built, they were going to build it so it went straight behind the stone house. It was following an old Lenni Lenape trail. My great aunt sat out on her porch with a shotgun to prevent the loss of land that would have caused. Not to mention the fact that the old French plumbing was in the backyard! That is why the road turns sharply at the boundary lines, and goes behind an embankment.

I'm sorry if this document is a bit rambling, as it's mostly been stream of consciousness. I want future owners of this property to know something of the history. As I have little access to photos at the time of this writing, I will donate them to the New Hope and Doylestown Historical Societies. I will also be creating online repositories on Google Drive and at Archive.org. [https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1IMwRlaiv7JHzBzKpsKKU6RPohNP1c\\_rii?usp=share\\_link](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1IMwRlaiv7JHzBzKpsKKU6RPohNP1c_rii?usp=share_link)

I can be reached at 215-262-0463 and at [cygnata@yahoo.com](mailto:cygnata@yahoo.com). As I am currently the only person to use the Cygnata nickname online, and am likely to be for some time, I can always be found. Ignore the Reanna Michaels alias, that is also me. I would be happy to share with you anything else I've learned about the property since. We have no records from the family who owned the place before us, and only a few artifacts have been found. When they were building the addition to the stone house, my grandmother found some blue and white pottery. She chunked it into the rubble of the foundation and it should still be there today. The original flagstones from in front of the house should still be there. Finally, my father found an old glass soda bottle from the company that became A-Treat while in the woods. Their original bottling facility was just down the road.

I again want to express my hope that the houses are still standing when you find this, and the woods still grow tall. May your family enjoy this place for generations to come. I wish it had been me to continue to act as caretaker, but life has decreed otherwise. May the spirits of this land watch over you and yours for as long as you dwell here.

Sincerely,

Becky Fish